

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 00083 071821Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DOTE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 AID-20 OC-06 CCO-00

OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-04 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /144 W

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R 071730Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1696

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, GT

SUBJECT: RAILWAY WORKERS' UNION BEGINS PARTIAL STRIKE

SUMMARY: ON JANUARY 2, RAILWAY WORKERS' UNION (SAMF) BEGAN PROGRESSIVE STRIKE AGAINST NATIONAL RAILWAY (FEGUA) TO PROTEST LACK OF PROGRESS IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR NEW CONTRACT. STRIKES, WHICH ARE HELD DAILY FOR SHORT PERIOD, HAVE BEEN 100 PERCENT EFFECTIVE IN STOPPING RAIL SERVICE. GOG HAS CALLED STRIKES ILLEGAL AND LABOR MINISTER HAS LINKED UNION ACTION TO "EXTREMIST POLITICAL ORDERS." END SUMMARY.

1. ON JANUARY 2, SAMF INITIATED DAILY WORK STOPPAGES AGAINST FEGUA TO PROTEST LACK OF PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATION OF NEW COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT TO REPLACE LAST AGREEMENT REACHED IN 1965. UNION HAS DEMANDED 50 PERCENT SALARY INCREASE (WHICH IS STANDARD "FIRST POSITION" AMONG GUATEMALAN UNIONS), BUT HAS OFFERED TO ACCEPT DRASTIC PERSONNEL CUTBACKS TO PUT FEGUA STAFFING IN LINE WITH MANPOWER NEEDS. FEGUA REFUSES TO CONSIDER ANY SALARY INCREASE, CLAIMING THAT FINANCIAL POSITION OF COMPANY (WHICH IS DISASTROUS) RULES THIS OUT. WORK STOPPAGES HAVE BEEN HELD DAILY AND APPEAR

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PAGE 02 GUATEM 00083 071821Z

TO BE 100 PERCENT EFFECTIVE TO PARALYZING FEGUA FOR A BRIEF PERIOD EACH DAY. SAMF STATES THAT THE STOPPAGES, WHICH ARE

PROGRESSIVELY ONE HOUR LONGER EACH DAY, WILL CONTINUE UNTIL FEGUA CONCEDES A PAY RAISE.

2. GOG HAS RESPONDED TO SAMF ACTION BY POINTING OUT ITS ILLEGALITY AND STRESSING FEGUA'S POOR ECONOMIC CONDITION. MINISTER OF LABOR, WHO IS PROBABLY STILL SMARTING FROM HAVING BEEN LABELLED ON DECEMBER 27 "NUMBER ONE ENEMY OF LABOR" BY BULK OF TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, WARNED THAT UNION LEADERS HAD STEPPED OUT OF BOUNDS OF LEGITIMATE TRADE UNION ACTIVITY AND PUT THEMSELVES AT DISPOSAL OF "EXTREMIST POLITICAL ORDERS."

3. COMMENT: GOG ALREADY SUBSIDIZES FEGUA HEAVILY TO GUARANTEE REGULAR PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND IS PROBABLY NOT EAGER TO AUGMENT SUBSIDY BY RAISING PAY. SAMF, HOWEVER, IS CAPABLE OF FULLY PARALYZING RAIL TRANSPORT AND APPEARS NOT TO WORRY ABOUT POSSIBLE RETALIATION FOR CONDUCTING ILLEGAL STRIKE. AFTER FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH FEGUA AND MINISTRY OF FINANCE, WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEGUN, GOG MAY WELL AGREE TO MODEST PAY RAISE TO KEEP PROBLEM FROM GROWING INTO SERIOUS ISSUE. END COMMENT.

DECONTROL DEC. 31, 1975.  
DREYFUSS

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, WAGES, UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, RAILROADS, LABOR STRIKES, ILLEGAL STRIKES, LABOR AGREEMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 07 JAN 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974GUATEM00083  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** GUATEMALA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740159/aaaacdts.tel  
**Line Count:** 85  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** MorefiRH  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 16 SEP 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <16 SEP 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <17-Sep-2002 by MorefiRH>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RAILWAY WORKERS' UNION BEGINS PARTIAL STRIKE SUMMARY: ON JANUARY 2, RAILWAY WORKERS' UNION (SAMF)  
**TAGS:** PINT, ELAB, ETRN, GT, SAMF, FEGUA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005